

As we sat in my office, Sergeant Nielsen told me about another Ranger, a silent marcher who also accompanied him on this journey. His name was PFC James Markwell. PFC Markwell and Sergeant Nielsen had just recently completed their Ranger training when our country called upon them to participate in the invasions of Panama. They both answered the call knowing that the mission could cost them their lives, which was, indeed, the case for PFC Markwell.

After Markwell was killed in action, it was Sergeant Nielsen who was assigned to recover his body and accompany his fallen comrade home on his final journey.

As Sergeant Nielsen marched to Washington, he carried in his cargo pocket the very essence of every Ranger, the black beret of his fallen brother.

The black beret is more than a symbol of an elite fighting unit. It is an outward symbol of those who have gone before, those Rangers who fell in combat, and those who have returned to their families.

It is also about the commitment of today's Rangers who sacrifice much, who leave the comforts of their families, and place themselves in harm's way when duty calls.

On June 14 of the year 2001, by directive of the United States Army Chief of Staff, all U.S. Army soldiers will be issued a black beret as standard issue.

The Special Forces will still wear their green berets. Our Airborne troops will still wear their maroon berets. But after a quarter century of being the only soldiers authorized to wear the black beret, the Rangers will be without the beret that has stood as their symbol of pride and tradition.

As if all of this were not enough, it has recently come to light that the Pentagon has bypassed the "Buy American" law and purchased the bulk of the 3 million berets from Communist China. In my opinion, this only adds insult to injury. For the life of me, I cannot understand why the Pentagon wants our soldiers to wear headgear produced in a communist country and at a cost of \$35 million.

I do not think a potential adversary should be producing a beret that has come to symbolize honor and valor. This is one more example of political correctness gone wrong.

Social engineering within the armed forces of the United States is a policy Bill Clinton started. It has been divisive and distracting to the morale of our forces; and it needs to end, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to, again, thank Sergeant Nielsen and Sergeant Round for their efforts to bring attention to this most important issue. They are two men who served our Nation honorably and who do not want to see the black beret sacrificed in the name of political correctness.

Mr. Speaker, I close by saying God bless the men and women in uniform and God bless America.

SCANT ATTENTION PAID TO THE GREAT BRAVERY OF THOSE WHO SERVE IN UNIFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, one of the great privileges and pleasures we have as Members of Congress is to appoint our fine young people to our service academies, be it Air Force, West Point, Annapolis, Merchant Marine, or Coast Guard. It always impresses me when I hear from some of them who have either told me about their experiences or, in fact, have written on issues that may concern them relative to our country.

I had a great opportunity last week to receive over my fax, obviously, a letter from a proud father, George Liedel, who is a doctor in Sebring, Florida, at Highlands Regional Medical Center. He sent this from Jennifer, Jennifer Liedel, his daughter who is at West Point. I nominated her in 1997. She sent this Friday, February 23, from her computer to her mom and dad. The subject: "I think this puts things in perspective as to where our priorities really are as a nation."

On 18 February 2001, while racing for fame and fortune, Dale Earnhardt died in the last lap of the Daytona 500. It was surely a tragedy for his family, friends and fans. He was 49 years old with grown children, one who was in the race with him. I am new to the NASCAR culture, so much of what I know has come from the newspaper and TV. He was a winner and earned everything he had. This included more than "\$41 million in winnings and 10 times that from endorsements and souvenir sales." He had a beautiful home and a private jet. He drove the most sophisticated cars allowed, and every part was inspected and replaced as soon as there was any evidence of wear. This is normally fully funded by the car and team sponsors. Today, there is no TV station that does not constantly remind us of his tragic end, and the radio already has a song of tribute to this winning driver. Nothing should be taken away from this man. He was a professional and the best in his profession. He was in a very dangerous business, but the rewards were great.

Two weeks ago, seven U.S. Army soldiers died in a training accident when two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters collided during night maneuvers in Hawaii. The soldiers were all in their twenties, pilots, crew chiefs and infantrymen. Most of them lived in substandard housing. If you add their actual duty hours, in the field, deployed, they probably earn something close to minimum wage. The aircraft they were in was between 15 and 20 years old. Many times parts were not

available to keep them in good shape due to funding. They were involved in the extremely dangerous business of flying in the Kauhuku Mountains at night. It only gets worse when the weather moves in as it did that night. Most times no one is there with the yellow or red flag to slow thing down when it gets critical. Their children are mostly toddlers who will lose all memory of who 'Daddy' was as they grow up. They died training to defend our freedom.

I take nothing away from Dale Earnhardt but ask you to perform this simple test. Ask any of your friends if they know who was the NASCAR driver killed 18 February 2001. Then ask them if they can name one of the seven soldiers who died in Hawaii 2 weeks ago.

18 February 2001, Dale Earnhardt died driving for fame and glory at the Daytona 500. The Nation mourns. Seven soldiers died training to protect our freedom. No one can remember their names, and most do not even remember the incident.

For the record, the six identified casualties were Major Robert L. Olson of Minnesota; Chief Warrant Officer George P. Perry and Chief Warrant Officer Gregory I. Montgomery, both of California; Sergeant Thomas E. Barber of Champlin, Minnesota; Specialist Bob D. MacDonald of Alta Loma, California; and Specialist Rafael Olvera-Rodriguez of El Paso, Texas.

She hits pretty much the nail on the head, as they say. We are completely smitten by personalities and successful stars, rock stars, TV actors, and others; and we give scant appreciation to those who serve in the military.

Those men who just were mentioned, who died training for this country, deserve more than my speech on the floor or her memo. I hope it brings us to call to mind that the great bravery exhibited by our men and women in uniform, those on the police departments, our schoolteachers, our firefighters, you name the profession who works for the public, deserve more than thinking their life's work does not deserve headlines or certainly does not deserve the appreciation of our country.

I salute Jennifer for bringing this memo to my attention. I salute her for her service to West Point, and I praise our country for those young people who choose to serve our country in uniform.

INDIA EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to speak about the continued relief efforts in India after the massive 7.9 earthquake that rocked the nation in January. After the earthquake, I came to the floor to request USAID to double the amount of assistance it was sending to India, from \$5 million to \$10 million.

Today, more than \$13 million has been sent. This is a good start; but clearly, the \$13 million is not enough to address the continued struggles India, particularly Gujarat, is facing at this time.

The havoc on the ground in terms of human suffering must be understood. Our friends in India will be facing monsoons very soon. We must move fast to ensure all support possible to prevent epidemic and further tragedies in the earthquake's aftermath.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address five strong areas where I think we could continue to help. Several of these ideas were discussed at a subcommittee hearing of the Committee on International Relations by several of my colleagues who visited the region after the earthquake.

First, I ask the World Bank and the Asian Development Fund to move quickly to approve India's petition for soft-window or low-interest loans funding. The ADF recently finished its appraisal of the Gujarat disaster and increased its earlier estimate of aid loans from \$350 million to \$500 million. This increase in the appraisal by the ADF clearly demonstrates the terrible need on the ground.

The President of the Asian Development Bank has pledged his support, and I laud him for that; but currently this proposal is held up before their board. The board is meeting late March to decide the \$500 million funding for ADF's Gujarat Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project.

Now normally the Asian Development Fund does not offer concessional loans to India due to India's size, but clearly Gujarat is in the midst of a great human and fiscal disaster and definitely merits these loans. We as a donor country can and must ask the ADF to make this exception.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Office of Management and Budget to improve 416(b) disaster mitigation funding. This proposal sent by nongovernmental organizations in India to the U.S. Department of Agriculture allocates estimated relief at 60,000 metric tons of vegetable oil and other commodities, valued at over \$32 million for this year. This proposal, originally designed for aid to the entire country, is now being focused on Gujarat in light of the earthquake.

We must understand that this region suffered a horrible drought in the last 2 years, so this is an emergency within an emergency. The proposal has gone through technical reviews, has received positive endorsements from USAID, State Department, and the Department of Agriculture, but is still stalled at OMB. I encourage OMB to release this funding for India immediately.

Third, Mr. Speaker, we must focus on detailed talks between the Indian National Government and FEMA to help create a FEMA-type model for India. Currently, there is an active debate in India about creating an agency like FEMA, and the Indian Government has shown great interest in collaborating with the U.S. Government. The FEMA talks are currently in the how-to stage.

We must move quickly so we can implement the plans expeditiously as possible.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, we must also work with local governments in India to help create a local response system similar to ones we have in the United States, in Fairfax, Virginia, and Miami, Florida. This would certainly improve rescue operations and help minimize loss of life in the crucial hours after disaster has struck.

In addition, we should have technical experts from the earthquake-prone areas such as California work together with the Indian officials to create appropriate public-warning procedures, routine earthquake drills, civilian protection mechanisms, and earthquake-safe foundation structures. We must share the lessons we learned from the devastating Northridge earthquake in California in 1992 to help Gujarat rebuild itself, as well as prepare for such future disasters.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we must focus on creation of a better U.S. rescue response system around the world. The current system, while successful in rebuilding procedures, needs revamping of its international rescue response procedures in the immediate hours after an emergency. Switzerland, the UK, and Israel were on the ground in India within 48 hours to start rescue operations while it took the U.S. Government more than 72 hours to get our first official relief efforts there.

USAID is considering prepositioning resources by setting up ground offices in disaster-prone regions of the world to expedite aid disbursement during calamities. I support setting up such an office in India.

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An important thing for us to understand is how vital a strong India is for U.S. interests. With India increasingly showing signs of political strength and stability, and stronger restraint in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, we must demonstrate that we stand by our friend in their hour of need. Indians are not looking for handouts. They are very strong, resilient people who can and will rebuild Gujarat back. However, we must not leave them alone in coping with this devastating earthquake.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore ask my fellow colleagues to stand strong with me in pushing these recommendations immediately for long-lasting support to India.

MASSIVE IMMIGRATION INTO
UNITED STATES MUST BE
STOPPED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) was up here a moment ago, and while I was waiting to speak to the House tonight, I listened to his concerns with regard to the black beret issue, and I want to add my voice to his in expressing that concern; and to add one other point that I do not believe he made, and I just recalled it as I was sitting here.

To add insult to injury, the berets are being purchased, being made in China, being purchased from the communist regime in China, and being imposed as the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) said, for political correctness. I want to add my voice to his in expressing deep concern about this particular proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to bring to the attention of the House a tragic accident that occurred in Colorado just yesterday. It took the lives of 6 Mexican nationals and injured 13 others.

All of these people were in a van. The van was hit by a truck on the highway which hit a patch of ice. The van was transporting these people, Mexican nationals, to jobs in the United States and they were crossing Colorado. This has become an all too common event. We have had 8 or more people killed in Colorado, I know the numbers are expanded by events in other States. Always the same thing. People being transported, people being exploited by others, having money taken from them for the purpose of bringing them to jobs in the United States, transporting them illegally into this country. They are abused many times. They are certainly exploited, and oftentimes they are exploited when they get here, working under conditions that we would not tolerate in any other situation, oftentimes at lower pay. All of this because, of course, some employers, unscrupulous employers, know that they can do that because the employee, being here illegally, is afraid to go and report it for fear of what would happen to them.

The problem that this raises is not just the problem of the tragic toll of human life that occurred in Colorado yesterday, and that is our primary concern this evening. But I think it is important for us to understand that this underscores a much more significant problem that we face as a Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation cannot absorb the number of people that are coming across our borders, both legally and illegally. The immigration into this country over the last 10 years has been extraordinary. Now we are, of course, a Nation of immigrants. I understand that very well. My own grandparents, like everyone else's here in this room, with the exception of Native Americans who might have claim to some other way of being here, the fact is that most of us are here as a result